

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1-290. (CANCELED)

291. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A method comprising:
generating, by a controller, a plurality of locked outcomes;
generating, by the controller for each of the plurality of locked outcomes, a
respective unlock code capable of unlocking the locked outcome;
transmitting by the controller via electronic transmission at least one of the
plurality of locked outcomes to a device of a user prior to receiving from the user
any respective unlock code for the at least one locked outcome,
in which each transmitted locked outcome at the device of the user
corresponds to a respective prize, in which the respective prize cannot be
revealed to the user until the locked outcome is unlocked on the device of
the user with its respective unlock code;
transmitting, by the controller, at least one of the plurality of unlock codes to
a merchant,
in which the user is not the same as the merchant; and
after transmitting the at least one locked outcome to the user and after
transmitting the at least one unlock code to the merchant, receiving by the
controller, from the user, an indication of at least one of the at least one unlock
code[[s]] transmitted to the merchant.

292. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method of claim 291, further
comprising:
selling the at least one of the plurality of unlock codes to the merchant.

293. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method of claim 291, further comprising:

selling the at least one of the plurality of locked outcomes to the user.

294. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method of claim 291, further comprising:

receiving an indication that at least one of the at least one locked outcomes transmitted to the device of the user has been unlocked.

295. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A method comprising:

purchasing, by a retailer, a plurality of unlock codes, each unlock code being associated with an identifier that identifies a respective lottery outcome;

determining, by the retailer, that a user has satisfied a qualifying action that is associated with a retailer;

in response to determining that the user has satisfied a qualifying action, prompting, by the retailer, the user to provide at least one identifier that identifies a lottery outcome that is currently locked;

receiving, by a device of the retailer from a portable computing device of a user, an identifier that identifies a lottery outcome that is currently locked and that is stored on the device of the user;

determining an unlock code of the plurality of purchased unlock codes based on the received identifier that identifies the lottery outcome that is locked and that is stored on the device of the user; and

providing the determined unlock code to the portable computing device of the user.

296. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method of claim 295, in which determining that the user has satisfied the qualifying action comprises:
determining that the user visited an establishment of the retailer.

297. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method of claim 295, in which determining that the user has satisfied the qualifying action comprises:
determining that the user purchased a product from the retailer.

298. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method of claim 295, in which determining that the user has satisfied the qualifying action comprises:
receiving from the user an amount for a purchase that is not less than a predetermined amount.

299. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method of claim 295, in which the device of the retailer comprises a point-of-sale terminal.

300. (CANCELLED)

301. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method of claim 291, in which at least one of the at least one locked outcome transmitted to the device of the user is associated with a respective qualifying action that is based on an external event.

302. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The method of claim 301, in which the external event is a result of a sports game.

303. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method of claim 291, in which at least one of the at least one locked outcome transmitted to the device of the user is

associated with a respective qualifying action, in which satisfaction of the qualifying action is determinable based on information ascertained from at least one of the following types of sensors:

- a retinal scanner,
- a heart monitor,
- a skin conductivity sensor, or
- a breath analyzer.

304. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method of claim 291, in which at least one of the at least one locked outcome transmitted to the device of the user is associated with a respective qualifying action in which the user is required to fill out a survey.

305. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method of claim 291, in which at least one of the at least one locked outcome transmitted to the device of the user is associated with a respective qualifying action in which the user is required to release private information.

306. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method of claim 291, in which at least one of the at least one locked outcome transmitted to the device of the user is associated with a respective qualifying action in which the user is required to pass an accuracy test.

307. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method of claim 291, in which at least one of the at least one locked outcome transmitted to the device of the user is associated with a respective qualifying action, in which satisfaction of the

qualifying action is determinable based on whether the user answers similar questions consistently.

308. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method of claim 291, in which at least one of the at least one locked outcome transmitted to the device of the user is associated with a respective qualifying action in which the user is required to stand in line at a checkout counter for a predetermined period of time.

308. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method of claim 291, in which at least one of the at least one locked outcome transmitted to the device of the user is associated with a respective qualifying action in which the user is required to stand in line at a customer service counter for a predetermined period of time.

309. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method of claim 291, in which at least one of the at least one locked outcome transmitted to the device of the user is associated with a respective qualifying action in which the user is required to perceive predetermined content.

310. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method of claim 291, in which at least one of the at least one locked outcome transmitted to the device of the user is associated with a respective qualifying action in which the user is required to view an advertisement.

311. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method of claim 291, in which at least one of the at least one locked outcome transmitted to the device of the user is associated with a respective qualifying action in which the user is required to achieve a predetermined performance level of a game.

312. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method of claim 291, in which at least one of the at least one locked outcome transmitted to the device of the user is associated with a respective qualifying action in which the user is required to achieve a predetermined performance level of a test of skill.

313. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method of claim 291, in which at least one of the at least one locked outcome transmitted to the device of the user is associated with a respective qualifying action in which the user is required to wait on hold on a telephone for a predetermined period of time.

314. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method of claim 295, in which each unlock code of the plurality of purchased unlock codes is associated with a respective qualifying action that is based on an external event.

315. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method of claim 314, in which the external event is a result of a sports game.

316. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method of claim 295, in which each unlock code of the plurality of purchased unlock codes is associated with a respective qualifying action, in which satisfaction of the qualifying action is determinable based on information ascertained by at least one of the following types of sensors:

- a retinal scanner,
- a heart monitor,
- a skin conductivity sensor, or
- a breath analyzer.

317. (NEW) The method of claim 291, in which each unlock code is a key associated with a decryption algorithm for decrypting the corresponding locked outcome.
318. (NEW) The method of claim 291, in which each locked outcome is an encoded outcome, and in which each unlock code describes an algorithm for decoding the corresponding encoded outcome.
319. (NEW) The method of claim 291, in which each locked outcome comprises an outcome obscured using scratch-off technology, and in which each unlock code indicates a respective space to scratch off to reveal the corresponding outcome, to thereby unlock the locked outcome.
320. (NEW) The method of claim 291, in which each unlock code comprises code bits that tell the device of the user whether to reveal the corresponding locked outcome.
321. (NEW) The method of claim 291, in which transmitting the at least one of the plurality of locked outcomes comprises:
determining a location of the device of the user via a GPS detector, sensor or receiver of the device of the user; and
determining how many locked outcomes to transmit to the device of the user based on the location of the device of the user.

322. (NEW) The method of claim 291, further in which each locked outcome is associated with a respective at least one of a symbol, value, identifier, benefit or prize.
323. (NEW) The method of claim 291, in which the request to redeem the benefit comprises an identifier that identifies the outcome.
324. (NEW) The method of claim 291, in which unlocking the at least one locked outcome comprises revealing a symbol associated with an outcome, and in which the request to redeem the benefit comprises the symbol that identifies the outcome.
325. (NEW) The method of claim 291, in which unlocking the at least one locked outcome comprises revealing a symbol associated with an outcome, in which the symbol is not unique among the at least one locked outcome, in which the request to redeem the benefit comprises the symbol that identifies the outcome and an identifier that identifies the retailer, and in which the benefit is based on the symbol and the retailer.
326. (NEW) The method of claim 295, in which each lottery outcome can be unlocked only by its respective unlock code.
327. (NEW) The method of claim 295, in which determining that the user has satisfied the qualifying action that is associated with the retailer comprises:

determining a location of the device of the user via a GPS detector, sensor or receiver of the device of the user.

328. (NEW) A computer readable medium storing instructions configured to direct a controller to perform a method of:
generating a plurality of locked outcomes;
generating, for each of the plurality of locked outcomes, a respective unlock code capable of unlocking the locked outcome;
transmitting via electronic transmission at least one of the plurality of locked outcomes to a storage device of a user prior to receiving from the user any respective unlock code for the at least one locked outcome,
in which each transmitted locked outcome stored at the storage device of the user corresponds to a respective prize, in which the respective prize cannot be revealed to the user until the stored locked outcome is unlocked with its respective unlock code;
transmitting at least one of the plurality of unlock codes to a merchant,
in which the user is not the same as the merchant; and
after transmitting the at least one locked outcome to the user and after transmitting the at least one unlock code to the merchant, receiving from the user an indication of at least one of the at least one unlock code transmitted to the merchant.

329. (NEW) An apparatus comprising:
a processor; and
a storage device in communication with the processor, the storage device storing instructions configured to direct the processor to perform a method of:
generating a plurality of locked outcomes;

generating, for each of the plurality of locked outcomes, a respective unlock code capable of unlocking the locked outcome;

transmitting by a controller via electronic transmission at least one of the plurality of locked outcomes to a storage device of a user prior to receiving from the user any respective unlock code for the at least one locked outcome,

in which each transmitted locked outcome stored at the storage device of the user corresponds to a respective prize, in which the respective prize cannot be revealed to the user until the stored locked outcome is unlocked with its respective unlock code;

transmitting by the controller at least one of the plurality of unlock codes to a merchant,

in which the user is not the same as the merchant; and

after transmitting the at least one locked outcome to the user and after transmitting the at least one unlock code to the merchant, receiving by the controller, from the user, an indication of at least one of the at least one unlock code transmitted to the merchant.

330. (NEW) A computer readable medium storing instructions configured to direct a computing device to perform a method of:

purchasing, by a retailer, a plurality of unlock codes, each unlock code being associated with an identifier that identifies a respective lottery outcome;

determining, by the retailer, that a user has satisfied a qualifying action that is associated with a retailer;

in response to determining that the user has satisfied a qualifying action, prompting, by the retailer, the user to provide at least one identifier that identifies a lottery outcome that is currently locked;

receiving, by a device of the retailer from a portable computing device of a user, an identifier that identifies a lottery outcome that is currently locked and that is stored on the device of the user;

determining an unlock code of the plurality of purchased unlock codes based on the received identifier that identifies the lottery outcome that is locked and that is stored on the device of the user; and

providing the determined unlock code to the portable computing device of the user.

331. (NEW) An apparatus comprising:

a processor; and

a storage device in communication with the processor, the storage device storing instructions configured to direct the processor to perform a method of:

purchasing, for a retailer, a plurality of unlock codes, each unlock code being associated with an identifier that identifies a respective lottery outcome;

determining, by the retailer, that a user has satisfied a qualifying action that is associated with a retailer;

in response to determining that the user has satisfied a qualifying action, prompting, by the retailer, the user to provide at least one identifier that identifies a lottery outcome that is currently locked;

receiving, by a device of the retailer from a portable computing device of a user, an identifier that identifies a lottery outcome that is currently locked and that is stored on the device of the user;

determining an unlock code of the plurality of purchased unlock codes based on the received identifier that identifies the lottery outcome that is locked and that is stored on the device of the user; and

providing the determined unlock code to the portable computing device of the user.

332. (NEW) A portable computing device comprising:
- a processor;
 - a communications port connected to the processor; and
 - a storage device connected to the processor, the storage device storing instructions configured to direct the processor to perform a method of:
 - receiving from a controller at least one locked outcome prior to transmitting to the controller any respective unlock code for the at least one locked outcome;
 - storing the at least one locked outcome such that any respective prize, value, symbol, or benefit associated with the at least one stored locked outcome is hidden from a user until a respective unlock code is applied;
 - receiving an unlock code from a device of a retailer, in which the user is not the same as the retailer;
 - prior to sending a redemption request to the controller, unlocking at least one of the at least one stored locked outcome using the unlock code, thereby revealing at least one unlocked outcome to the user;
 - after receiving the at least one locked outcome and after receiving the unlock code from the device of the retailer, transmitting to the controller a redemption request to redeem a benefit associated with the at least one unlocked outcome; and
 - receiving from the controller an indication of the benefit.

333. (NEW) The method of claim 332, in which the portable computing device is embodied in a telephone.

334. (NEW) The method of claim 332, in which the portable computing device is embodied in a personal digital assistant.

335. (NEW) A method comprising:

generating, by a controller, a locked outcome, the locked outcome being associated with an identifier that identifies the locked outcome;

generating, by the controller, a first unlock code capable of unlocking the locked outcome;

generating, by the controller, a second unlock code capable of unlocking the locked outcome;

transmitting, by the controller, via electronic transmission the locked outcomes to a storage device of a first user prior to receiving from the first user any unlock code for the locked outcome;

transmitting, by the controller, via electronic transmission the locked outcomes to a storage device of a second user prior to receiving from the second user any unlock code for the locked outcome;

transmitting, by the controller, the first unlock code to a first merchant;

transmitting, by the controller, the second unlock code to a second merchant;

receiving, by the controller, from the first user a request to redeem a first benefit associated with the locked outcome after the first user unlocked the outcome to reveal the identifier that identifies the outcome, the request including the identifier;

receiving, by the controller, from the second user a request to redeem a second benefit associated with the locked outcome after the second user unlocked

the outcome to reveal the identifier that identifies the outcome, the request including the identifier;

providing, by the controller, an indication of the first benefit to the first user;
and

providing, by the controller, an indication of the second benefit to the second user, in which the second benefit is different than the first benefit, thereby providing different benefits to different users based on the same locked outcome.

336. (NEW) A computer readable medium storing instructions configured to direct a controller to perform a method of:

generating a locked outcome, the locked outcome being associated with an identifier that identifies the locked outcome;

generating a first unlock code capable of unlocking the locked outcome;

generating a second unlock code capable of unlocking the locked outcome;

transmitting via electronic transmission the locked outcomes to a storage device of a first user prior to receiving from the first user any unlock code for the locked outcome;

transmitting via electronic transmission the locked outcomes to a storage device of a second user prior to receiving from the second user any unlock code for the locked outcome;

transmitting the first unlock code to a first merchant;

transmitting the second unlock code to a second merchant;

receiving from the first user a request to redeem a first benefit associated with the locked outcome after the first user unlocked the outcome to reveal the identifier that identifies the outcome, the request including the identifier;

receiving from the second user a request to redeem a second benefit associated with the locked outcome after the second user unlocked the outcome to reveal the identifier that identifies the outcome, the request including the identifier; providing the first benefit to the first user; and providing the second benefit to the second user, in which the second benefit is different than the first benefit, thereby providing different benefits to different users based on the same locked outcome.

337. (NEW) An apparatus comprising:
a processor; and
a storage device in communication with the processor, the storage device storing instructions configured to direct the processor to perform a method of:
generating a locked outcome, the locked outcome being associated with an identifier that identifies the locked outcome;
generating a first unlock code capable of unlocking the locked outcome;
generating a second unlock code capable of unlocking the locked outcome;
transmitting via electronic transmission the locked outcomes to a storage device of a first user prior to receiving from the first user any unlock code for the locked outcome;
transmitting via electronic transmission the locked outcomes to a storage device of a second user prior to receiving from the second user any unlock code for the locked outcome;
transmitting the first unlock code to a first merchant;
transmitting the second unlock code to a second merchant;

receiving from the first user a request to redeem a first benefit associated with the locked outcome after the first user unlocked the outcome to reveal the identifier that identifies the outcome, the request including the identifier;

receiving from the second user a request to redeem a second benefit associated with the locked outcome after the second user unlocked the outcome to reveal the identifier that identifies the outcome, the request including the identifier;

providing the first benefit to the first user; and

providing the second benefit to the second user, in which the second benefit is different than the first benefit, thereby providing different benefits to different users based on the same locked outcome.